



THE
ALEXANDER
THOMSON
SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

Issue No 40 November 2010

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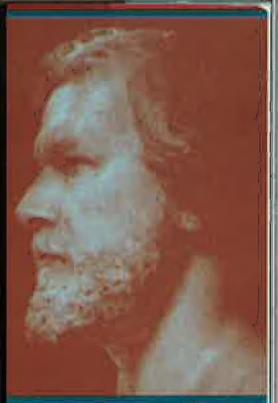
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I am honoured to have been elected as chairman after the last AGM, and recognise that we all owe a very considerable debt to my predecessor Kenneth Burns, whose enthusiasm for the Society has been exemplary.

We have an ambitious programme, but a rather small Board of Directors, all of whom are experts in various disciplines, and who all work very hard to keep the Society running and trying to meet its objectives. We do, however, rely rather too much on their good will, as they are all voluntary, have other work to do, and are all giving their time for free. I have become acutely aware of the need to recruit others, who might be willing to take responsibility for various tasks, such as (for example), running the Public Appeal for the Caledonia Road Church Project, which was launched in February this year. I know we have had a very good response from members, but we cannot hope to raise our target of £500,000 from members alone. I am sure that this project will be an enormous success, both as a restored and important Glasgow landmark, and also in raising the profile of Alexander Thomson and providing a proper archive and research centre for his work. I am also certain that many people will be convinced of this once they know about it, so it is a matter of how we inform people, and what devices we employ to raise funds. We need help with this important initiative, I very much hope that you might feel able to help, even with a few hours a month: if so, please contact me or any of the directors. Please write to the Secretary, 7 Walmer Crescent, Glasgow G51 1AT if you would like more information.

We are very grateful for the support of all of our members, and I would particularly like to thank so many of you who added an extra donation to the Caledonia Road Church Appeal (1 ATP) to their membership subscription. I hope that next year will see further advances in the appreciation and understanding of Thomson's architecture, and further support that will help ensure that at the very least Glasgow loses no more of his heritage.

Thank you for your interest, and please let others know about Thomson who continues to be an appreciated genius, and introduce them to his work that is of such seminal importance to Glasgow.

Professor Robin Webster OBE RSA FRIAS

THE AGM

Arrangements for the 2010 AGM, to be held on Saturday 4 December 2010, are in hand as this newsletter goes to press. A visit to the Southern Necropolis and Thomson's grave is planned.

THE LAUNCH - 1 ALEXANDER THOMSON PLACE APPEAL

In February this year the opening event of the public appeal commenced in the Citizens Theatre and the appeal was formally launched within the walls of Caledonia Road Church by Baillie Catherine McMaster. Despite the



icy weather there was a good turnout and news coverage by the BBC and STV.



1970 photograph of Caledonia Road Church.

Following on from the project report in last year's newsletter, (Issue 39 published in August 2009), planning approval for the Society's proposals for the former Caledonia Road Church was obtained in September 2009 and Listed Building Consent was granted in November 2009.

As part of the requirement for these submissions, a Conservation Plan for the Category 'A' Listed building was prepared for the Society by the architects, who involved Dr Dorothy Bell in a preliminary consultation. The Society was able to commission this work thanks to a grant of £3,000 from Glasgow City Council South East Area Committee, without which we would have had great difficulty in funding this aspect of the project.

In late December 2009 Glasgow City Council awarded additional funding of nearly £290,000 to the Alexander Thomson Society from the newly established 'Better Glasgow 2009-11 Fund'. This funding will enable the design team to advance work to Stage E, which mainly comprises the preparation and submission of the Building Warrant application. Obtaining this level of funding for our project was a remarkable achievement for the Society, taking into consideration the difficult financial climate and mounting pressures on the Glasgow City Council budgets.

The next stages of the project are to secure funding for the development of the Phase 1 of the Stonework Project (the tower) and for the remaining stage of work up to the preparation of tender documentation and production material. Phase 1 Stonework encompasses the removal of the 1980s render repairs on the tower, and stone indentation work. The estimated total cost of these elements is around £450,000. Funding applications for the main contract works will also be prepared based on an updated cost estimate of the project. The approximate value of the works is in the region of £5m.



Model by Christopher Townsend of the building as it was originally.

Among the 'moongrey nettles' washed by 'muttering rain' (as James Joyce [1882-1941] pertinently observed of them) in Ulster's fascinating graveyards may be found many extraordinary things, including mausolea (some very exotic indeed), elaborate tombstones, and memorials of every shape and size.

In the Plantation village of Castlecaulfeild, County Tyrone, is the extensive burial-ground of St Michael's Church of Ireland, the parish-church of Donaghmore. The church itself is of considerable interest, a strange mixture of charming seventeenth-century Gothic Survival with hesitant, somewhat crude, rustic interpretations of Classicism, and the graveyard is dominated by the tetrastyle Tuscan mausoleum of the Burges family of Parkanaur, erected after the death of John Henry Burges (1766-1822). Most old tombstones in Ulster churchyards are worth a look, but one stone stands out in Castlecaulfeild for its quality: it looks as though it could easily have sprung from the drawing-boards of Alexander 'Greek' Thomson or one of his colleagues or followers.

It commemorates the Rev. Benjamin Nicholson White Spunner, M.A. of Trinity College Dublin (1836-91, *aet.* 56 [which presumably means in his 56th year]), once of Miltown (or Milltown) Park, King's County (County Offaly), and Knockatana Castle, County Limerick, who was Rector of Donaghmore 1887-91. It is also a memorial to White Spunner's wife, Letitia Hannah Damer (d.1911, *aet.* 76), who is sometimes referred to as Letitia

Hannah Damer Sandys, born 1835 (though some sources claim, inaccurately, 1840) in the Isle of Wight but educated in America. The second daughter of Major T. Stratford Damer of Baltimore, MD, she was married to White Spunner, eldest son of Thomas Spunner White Spunner, of Castle Connell, County Limerick, in 1859 at 'Parsonstown Church, King's County' (which, given Ireland's shifting allegiances, means Birr, County Offaly). She was a naturalist 'of wide tastes, her speciality being botany', and prepared a herbarium of the wild flowers of Ireland, exhibited at the World's Columbian Exhibition, Chicago, in 1893, a fact recorded by Canon Henry William Lett (1836-1920) in 'Botanists of the North of Ireland' (*The Irish Naturalist* [February 1913] 21-33).

Why the White Spunner memorial should be so Thomsonesque is at present a mystery, but it must have been designed by somebody acquainted with Thomson's quirky style and detailing. First, there is the layering of planes at the top, very much a feature of Thomson's work; secondly, the repeated raised discs found on dozens of works by Thomson (e.g. St Vincent Street Church and Moray Place); thirdly, the repeated incised dots found, for example, on Thomson's Beattie and Middleton monuments in Glasgow Necropolis; fourthly, the central palmette (not quite the same as Thomson's use of this motif, it is true, but nevertheless not entirely unlike it either); fifthly, the variant on the familiar Thomson version of a simplified Greek Key pattern; and, finally, the repetitive tongue on a torus moulding, which Thomson occasionally used in inverted form.

This monument is worthy of notice, and lovers of Thomson's work will recognise in it many echoes of Thomson's style. Perhaps genealogists familiar with the White-Spunner-Damer connections will be able to shed further light on how aspects of the Glasgow Master's work managed to inform a funerary monument in a rural churchyard in Ulster's County Tyrone.

The Author acknowledges with thanks the help of Karen Latimer and Ian Johnson in the preparation of this brief notice. Photograph © Ian Johnson 2008. Professor James Stevens Curl is an architectural historian with many works to his credit, including *The Egyptian Revival* (2005), *The Oxford Dictionary of Architecture and Landscape Architecture* (2006), *Victorian Architecture: Diversity & Invention* (2007—which contains a perceptive section on Thomson), and *Spas, Wells, and Pleasure Gardens of London* (2010). He is a Member of the Royal Irish Academy, a Fellow of the Societies of Antiquaries of London and Scotland, and a Fellow of the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland.

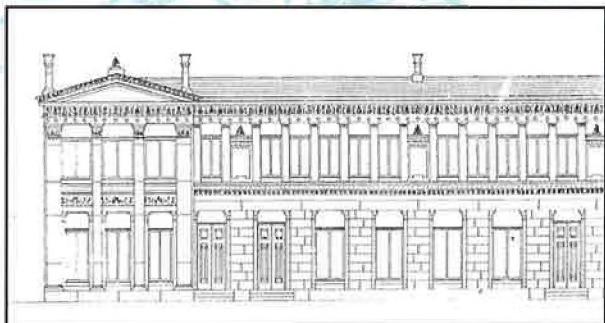
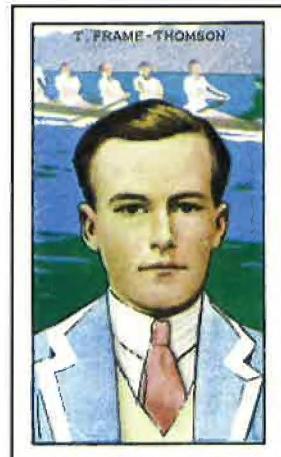


This year's lectures were as previously held in the Glasgow School of Art on Wednesday evenings in March of this year.

This year there were three lectures in all, instead of the usual four, as Edward Taylor who was to have spoken about Thomson's use of "Symbolism and Proportional Geometry" unfortunately had to cancel his talk shortly before the series began. It is hoped that Edward will be able to attend the forthcoming series in March and April next year. The remaining three talks, however, nevertheless provided ample food for thought.

Lecture One - Dominic d'Angelo the Society's former secretary began with an extensive survey of "Thomson's Family Tree" which, given the size of Thomson's family, represented many hours of painstaking research and traced his ancestry to Perthshire. Careers, relationships, births and deaths were all meticulously recorded in the lives of a remarkable array of personalities.

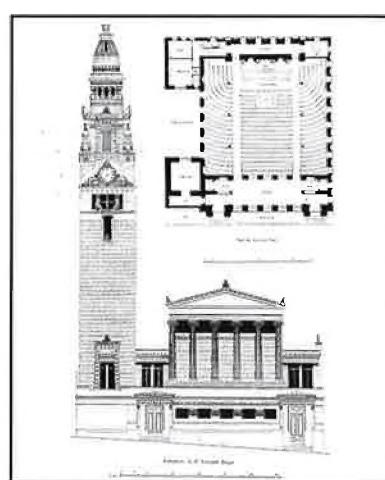
Thomas Frame-Thomson, grandson of William Cooper Thomson, AGT's brother. Rowing blue at Cambridge (stroked Cambridge to a 10th successive win in 1933, hence the card), became a test pilot at Biggin Hill during WW2, was chief engineer for Craig Breedlove's attempt on the world land speed record in 'Spirit of America' and married Sir Arthur Bliss's half-sister before spending the rest of his life growing avocados in California and flying Concorde on trips home.



Moray Place (completed 1861) Thomson lived in No 1 until his death in 1875

Lecture Three - Mark Baines, Vice Chair of the Society, offered some thoughts on the parallels between "Classical Greece, Glasgow and Thomson" in respect of urban planning and architectural language and their subsequent manifestations in nineteenth century Glasgow. Whilst illustrating the work of other architects the talk finally focused on Thomson's unique ability to creatively and meaningfully abstract from historical sources.

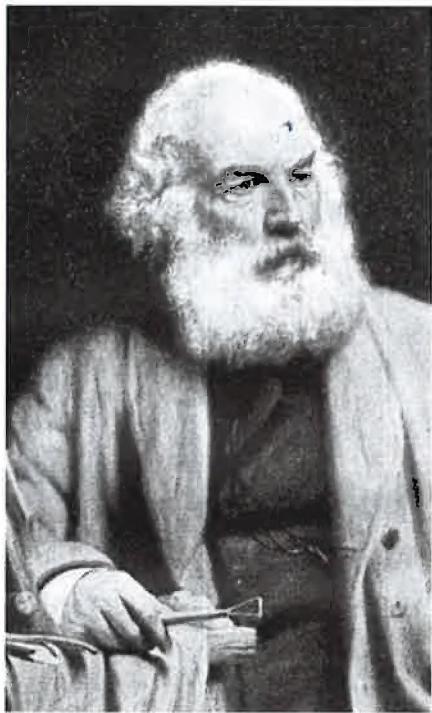
Lecture Two - Andrew Greg, owner of 1 Moray Place, gave a fascinating account of the ongoing restoration of Thomson's former home where stencil work has been discovered under the layers of paint and paper and the original arrangement of part of the house restored. Further progress will have been seen on Doors Open Day as the house was generously opened to visitors by the owners.



St Vincent Street Church (1857- 1859) demonstrates Thomson's mastery of abstraction

JOHN MOSSMAN 1817-1890
'THE FATHER OF GLASGOW SCULPTURE'

An extract from the talk by Gary Nisbet, given to the Alexander Thomson Society on 8th April 2009.



The name John Mossman is familiar to most people in Glasgow in connection with gravestones and his firm of monumental sculptors, J & G Mossman Ltd (of which he was the 'J' in the J & G), which trades today from 284 High Street. Others still are familiar with his name from passing references to him in the many books on the city's architecture and public sculpture that have appeared in recent years. However, unlike Alexander Thomson and Charles Rennie Mackintosh, who have quite rightly been accorded superstar status in the pantheon of Glasgow's Victorian artists, John Mossman is still a fairly obscure figure in the minds of the general public and, for reasons best known to themselves, is still largely overlooked by the civic and artistic authorities of the city; despite producing an astonishing amount of sculpture in a career that lasted sixty years and which spanned the golden age of public art and architecture in Glasgow from the days of David Hamilton in the 1830s, until the age of Mackintosh and JJ Burnet in the 1890s. Add to this the influence he exerted on the development of the arts in Glasgow with his co-founding of The Glasgow School of Art and the teaching of a generation of

sculptors and craftsmen in his workshops; it is perhaps time to take a closer look at the life and achievement of this unjustly neglected figure and accord him the honour that he richly deserves by recognizing him as 'The Father of Glasgow Sculpture'.

Mossman was born in London in the same year as Alexander Thomson, on 10th April 1817, the eldest son of the Scottish sculptor William Mossman I, who was working for Sir Francis Chantrey at the time. He studied with his father and Chantrey, and later with Sir William Allan at the RSA in Edinburgh in 1838, and completed his training under Baron Carlo Marochetti in London, in the 1840s.

After spending his formative years in London and Edinburgh, he moved to Glasgow around 1830, working in his father's firm of monumental masons (known as J & G Mossman from 1857), and came to the attention of David Hamilton, the 'Father of Glasgow's Architecture', and James Cleland, who ran a marble cutting business in conjunction with Hamilton's son. They provided Mossman with some of his earliest opportunities for architectural and sepulchral sculpture in the city, as well as an introduction to the generation of architects who would employ him so prolifically in the future. However, it was in the genre with which he is popularly associated today that he made his reputation as a sculptor: the Peter Lawrence Monument in the Necropolis, which featured a winged youth representing Life (1840). Described at the time as being 'the first free-standing figure produced in the West of Scotland by a sculptor rather than by a stonemason', its cultural significance completely by-passed the vandals who smashed this beautiful work to pieces a few decades ago (Mossman produced a modified copy of Life for the Harriet Simpson Monument in

Helensburgh Cemetery (1864), which is in pristine condition and would be ideal for use as the model for the restoration of the original work).

After returning to Scotland from Marochetti's studio, Mossman thereafter dominated the production and teaching of sculpture in Glasgow for the next fifty years, executing a colossal amount of the city's architectural sculpture and public monuments, and a prolific output of portrait busts and commemorative medallions and funerary monuments for his wealthy patrons. In no other Scottish city had a sculptor of such prolific and artistically accomplished endeavour been known, or one so closely involved in defining the appearance of the great Victorian metropolis that stands around us and which is marketed today as 'Scotland with style'.

Mossman's earliest recorded commission for architectural sculpture was for the statues on the Theatre Royal, Dunlop Street, which included his first portrait statue, the theatre's owner John Henry Alexander (1839, dem. 1879). This was followed by the statues on Hamilton's Union Bank in Ingram Street (now Corinthian) (1841-2); The McLellan Galleries (1855); the Clydesdale Bank in St Vincent Place (1871-4); the Stock Exchange (1874-7); Kelvinside Academy (1878); the Glasgow Herald Building, (1879-80) and a significant amount of sculpture on the City Chambers (1883-88), to name but a few of the countless buildings throughout the city that incorporated his work.

His masterpiece is undoubtedly the four statue groups on the old St Andrew's Halls (Mitchell Theatre) which, together with his brother William's colossal figures, complement the architecture's Classicism in perfect unity of style and breadth of treatment. It is these groups that can be seen being carved in Annan's magnificent photograph of Mossman's workshop, c.1877. Included in the group representing Pallas Athena and the ancient arts, is a self-portrait of Mossman as the Ancient Sculptor, and a portrait of Alexander Thomson as the Ancient Architect.



His status as a sculptor, however, was determined by the success of his public statues. His Sir Robert Peel (1859), a co-production with Alexander Thomson, was the first civic bronze by a Glasgow sculptor and was hailed in terms hitherto accorded only to 'foreign' sculptors who were usually entrusted with these prestigious jobs due to a lack of confidence in the abilities of 'local' artists. His later statues of Lumsden (1862); Livingstone (1875-9); Campbell (1877) and MacLeod (1881) enhanced his reputation further as Glasgow's 'chief sculptor', whilst his statues of Patrick Brewster (1863), Alexander Wilson (1874) and George A. Clark (1885) in Paisley consolidated his position as the most important statuaire in the country. He also executed the Viscount Ormiston Statue for Bombay. It should be obvious by now that we are dealing with an artist of extraordinary energy and fecundity, to whom the choicest commissions were awarded on merit and dependability. But he was responsible for so much more.

His public work includes several of the city's fountains, such as those to Hugh MacDonald (1860) and Sir William Collins (1881) on Glasgow Green, and the Stewart Fountain in Kelvingrove Park (1872), which has recently been restored. Also a prolific society portraitist, his many busts include William Connal (1856) and the Duke of Hamilton (1864).

A founding member of The Glasgow School of Art and the Glasgow Institute of Architects, he taught modelling at the school and served as Visiting Master and on the Committee of Management until 1890, and trained several sculptors of note as students and as assistants in his own studio and workshops, e.g., John Crawford, JP Macgillivray and DM Ferguson. Also a Freemason, he carved the Sphinxes on the arms of the throne in St John's Lodge No. 3, of which many other Glasgow sculptors and architects were also members, including the architect John Baird 'Primus', the throne's designer, and Alexander Thomson.

Closely linked with Thomson throughout his career as a friend and collaborator, Mossman produced a bust of the architect at the age of thirty (1847), and commissioned him to design his new studio and workshop at 83 North Frederick Street in July 1854. Mossman executed sculpture for many of Thomson's buildings and most of his funereal monuments, including: the Buck's Head Buildings (1863), the Woodrow Monument (c. 1849) and the Isabella McCulloch Monument (c. 1867). He also modelled Thomson's designs for the GIA Seal (1868) and the Haldane Academy Medal (1870), and was the natural choice to produce the Alexander Thomson Memorial Bust (1877).

His firm of monumental sculptors, J & G Mossman, produced vast number of monuments for cemeteries in Glasgow and elsewhere in Scotland, many of them incorporating sculpted ornament or portrait reliefs in bronze or marble. Involved in the design and carving of cemetery monuments since he was a boy, he was influenced in the styling of their figures and form by the work of John Flaxman in particular. A frequent exhibitor of marble busts and ideal works at the RSA, RA and RGIFA, he was elected HRSA in 1885. Retiring as a sculptor in 1886, his final architectural projects were for sculpture on two major buildings by JJ Burnet: the Clyde Navigation Trust Building (1882-6), and the Athenaeum (1886).

He died on 22nd September 1890, at his home in Port Bannatyne on the Isle of Bute aged 73, his cause of death being vascular disease of the heart. He was buried in Glasgow's Sighthill Cemetery, where his grave is marked by a severely plain, horizontal granite ledger which he had ordered from his firm's workshop on 28th June 1877, for £25.1s.1d., after the death of his sculptor son, William. A year after his own death, his firm was purchased by Peter Smith (1843-1911), who had been the manager of Mossman's granite workshop in the 1870s, and who kept the name J & G Mossman alive by continuing to trade under it, as it does today under his descendants, the Pollock Smiths.

Despite the colossal contribution that Mossman made to the cultural and architectural heritage of Glasgow, the city has so far made no attempt to recognise this in any meaningful or permanent way; the City of Culture festival in 1990 and the City of Architecture and Design 1999, being two important missed opportunities to accord him the recognition that he is clearly due.

After surveying his life and work it is doubtful if anyone could disagree with the argument presented above that Mossman was the most distinguished sculptor of his generation in the West of Scotland, and that his influence is still a potent force today. The best examples of the latter being the survival of the firm that still bears his name, the existence of The Glasgow School of Art and the emergence from it of Alexander Stoddart, the present Sculptor Royal in Scotland and Mossman's champion, whose work reasserts the values of the Classical tradition in which Mossman was a master of his art. Whilst it would be a greater honour for Mossman to be the subject of a statue by Stoddart, which must surely come, some day; we must content ourselves with the monuments that Mossman has given us and with which he has proved himself fully worthy of the title: 'The Father of Glasgow Sculpture'.

**BEAUFORT GARDENS, 19-23 GARTURK STREET, 265-289 ALLISON STREET
AND 34 DAISY STREET, GOVANHILL GLASGOW**

The Society was contacted by some local residents in Govanhill, expressing their concern about the future of these Thomson tenements. The tenements were built in 1878, begun by Thomson and completed by Turnbull, and are Category 'A' Listed. On inspection, the eastern side of the block, owned and managed by a local Housing Association would appear to be in better condition than the western half, which is the responsibility of various private owners and is suffering from poorer maintenance. The Society will write to the council about replacement windows.

EGYPTIAN HALLS

Another issue that is of great concern to the Society is the future of the Egyptian Halls, and our chair, Robin Webster has been in touch with the current owner and other experts and officials who are involved with the restoration and development of this most significant Thomson masterpiece. At the time of writing, it is too soon to say whether we can wholeheartedly support the current development proposals. We are however certainly not prepared to see the building demolished because of any failure to protect it, and we will do our best to ensure that everyone who is in a position to help to save it is fully informed of the situation, and will lend our support to whatever initiatives seem to be the best.

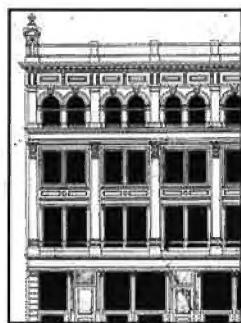
P L A N N I N G O B J E C T I O N S

PROPOSED TEMPORARY LAND USES (10 years) AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS TRON-GATE/CANDLERIGGS, GLASGOW. Site bounded by Trongate/Wilson Street/Brunswick Street/Candleriggs.

The Society has objected to the above proposal presented to the Glasgow Urban Design Panel 3rd June 2010 which included the demolition of a range of listed and unlisted buildings. There were concerns regarding the B listed buildings 106 and 140 Trongate which are of architectural and cultural significance. From the south footway of Trongate opposite Brunswick Street both the cast iron Trongate building and the sandstone Ingram Street building can be seen.

We asked that the following detailed objections are considered by Glasgow City Council.

- 1 The listed building at 140-144 Trongate should be returned to use and a better state of repair as a condition of any consent. Commercial buildings by the Glasgow architect James Milne Monro have a great scarcity value and as a surviving cast iron building in Glasgow 140-144 is of considerable importance as only five survive. The second J M Monro listed building is 124-140 Ingram Street and is related to the design of 140 Trongate.
- 2 The other two listed buildings 106-110 Trongate/3 - 9 Candleriggs and 170-174 Trongate/10 Hutcheson Street also require to be returned to use.
- 3 The loss of listed building no 32786 at 130-138 Trongate was regrettable as a scarce building C1790. The proposed timber pergola on the site must be reconsidered to relate in a more satisfactory manner to Trongate.
- 4 Smiths Court was not within the area of the Selfridges store and the continuing appearance of no maintenance should have resulted in a repairs order rather than an application to demolish a building of this date.



Elevation 124-140 Ingram St

O B I T U A R I E S

Anne McNicol, wife of Andrew, who lived in Lenzie, was one of the earliest members of the ATS and over the years enjoyed many happy times at meetings and outings with her fellow members. She died on 11th March 2010.

Dr. William Peter Dallas Ross of Blairgowrie, who died on 13 March 2010 was a long term supporter of the Society and its work.

Many people involved in the conservation of buildings were shocked to learn that the well respected Glasgow firm Hunter & Clark Ltd went into administration in June this year. The company was established in Gallowgate in the early 1900s by two monumental masons, Thomas Hunter and William Clark. The company, together with GS Height Services Ltd, an associate company, operated from a site around the original yard. This company currently maintains the tower of the former Caledonia Road Church for GCC and will continue to develop the scope of their work, as they are not affected by the administration.



Hunter and Clark repaired: the 'A' listed Queens Cross Church (1896-7) for CRM Society; James Sellars' 'A' listed Stewart Memorial Fountain in Kelvingrove Park; Belmont & Hillhead Parish C of S ('A' listed, James Sellars, 1875-6) after storm damage to roof; rebuilt spire and roof of Renfield St Stephen C of S (J T Emmett, 1849-52); Sherbrooke St Gilbert's C of S ('B' listed, W F MacGibbon, 1900) after it was gutted by fire in July 1994. The doorway from Thomson's Watson Street and Bell Street warehouse (saved by ATS board member Roger Guthrie) was taken down by Hunter and Clark Ltd and moved to their yard for safe storage. The doorway will continue to be stored in the yard thanks to GS Height Services Ltd until it can be moved to Caledonia Road Church to be incorporated into 1 Alexander Thomson Place.

THE QUEEN'S PARK CHURCH MODEL

The Queens Park Church model was built by Telford Fine Furniture and was commissioned for 'The Unknown Genius' Exhibition at the Lighthouse in 1999, as part of the '1999 Year of Architecture and Design'. The model, made of limewood, was later on display at Holmwood in Cathcart but because of the sheer scale of the model it could not be on permanent display in the house. Saved by an board member, Ruth Johnston, 2 years ago as the NTS could not store it any longer at Holmwood, the Society has been meeting the storage costs of the unassembled parts of the model, whilst a new permanent home was sought. This was not easy as the model is in some quite large, heavy sections, and when built occupies a space of approximately 12 x 12 x 12 feet. We are delighted to report that the model has now been reassembled in Cottier's Theatre in Hyndland, Glasgow where it will demonstrate an important link between Cottier and Thomson.



The Society has expressed its thanks to David Robertson, Director of the Four Acres Charitable Trust, who organised and funded its relocation and assembly in the ground floor of the Cottier Theatre.



Image on left : Model complete on Doors Open Day. Courtesy Jon Hand

Image above - during construction is included to show the scale of the model. Courtesy Sally White

Roger Guthrie arranged his usual range of walks through different areas of Glasgow, Cemeteries and Cove and Kilcreggan. He hopes to keep this range of walks going for next year.

The West End Festival walks were, as always, well attended and Doors Open Day walks in Dennistoun Conservation Area, The Glasgow Necropolis, Walmer Crescent and Crosshill Conservation Area looking at buildings, materials, architects and detailing had a good turnout.

Look out for next year's list of dates and times of walks on the website in due course.

The Egyptian style Hood Mausoleum in Cathcart Cemetery photographs courtesy Eilidh Guthrie

ATS AT HISTORIC GLASGOW DAY

ATS Stand at Historic Glasgow Day in the Glasgow City Chambers Banqueting Hall.



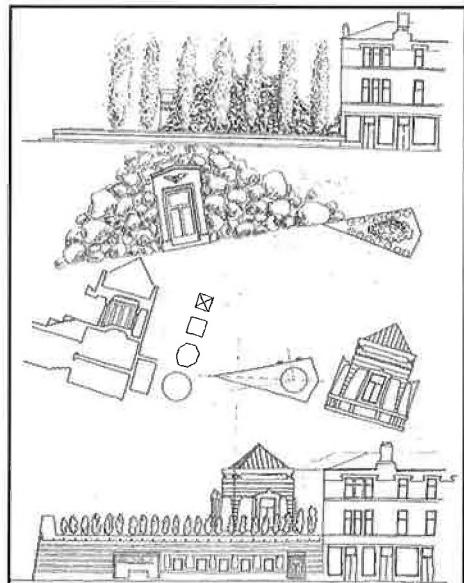
THOMSON MEMORIAL DRAWING BY MARK BAINES

This drawing of two proposals for a memorial to Alexander Thomson was discovered during the final leg of archiving the drawings, files and paraphenalia of the Gillespie, Kidd & Coia at the Glasgow School of Art. Both proposals are situated at the junction of Nithsdale Road at Moray Place, replacing the existing commercial premises and where, fittingly, they would have been overlooked by three Thomson tenements and 1 Moray Place.

On finding the drawing I remembered that there had been a competition for the then proposed roundabout. I also thought given the source of the drawing it might be the hand of Professor Andy MacMillan a patron of the Society and former partner in GK&C. In conversation with Andy it emerged that it is not his drawing but that it been presented to him by someone as it had probably caught his imagination. He recollects – vaguely – the competition, possibly organised by the Glasgow Institute of Architects, and believed that it had something to do with Fred Selby, an architect and historian. Judging by the post modern nature of the architectural compositions we dated it somewhere in the late 70's and early 80's. We both liked the version featuring the doorway leading into a burial mound of rubble – presumably a reference to the lost buildings of Thomson or of Glasgow during the preceding era.

If any member has any recollections of the competition the Society would be very interested to hear from you. The date of the drawing was probably 1973/74 allowing for construction by 1975 - the 100th anniversary of Thomson's death.

This response relating to the competition is contributed by Roger Guthrie - The Thomson memorial competition was won by Fred Selby, 1906-1989, who stayed at 38 Queen Mary Avenue, Strathbungo - as often the case with architectural competitions the drawings may not have survived especially as the project was not executed. Fred's design was four square precast concrete pillars in a square layout with a tapering section and the tops cranked inwards - from memory ! The site was the roundabout adjoining 1 Moray Place and my entry was rushed off on the last day of the competition - Robin Haddow, Homes & Partners, agreed that I could produce the drawing in office time and then deliver his entry - I think to City Chambers or to Scottish Civic Trust.



THE
ALEXANDER THOMSON
SOCIETY

Founded in 1991 to promote the life and works of Alexander 'Greek' Thomson (1817-1875)

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**The Earl of Glasgow
and**

Professor Andrew McMillan

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One (photocopy only) can be obtained from
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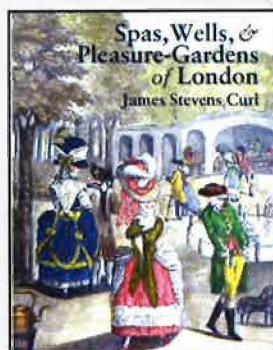
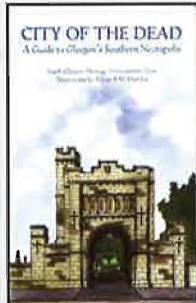


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